



BATMAN

467 US \$1.00
CAN \$1.25
LATE AUGUST UK 60p

BATMAN

APPROVED
COMICS
CODE
AUTHORITY



Tom Feeney



**A MOMENT AGO
THE TERROR
BEGAN...**

**SHADOW
BOX** **PART ONE**

DIXON • LYLE • MUSHYNSKY

SHADOW BOX

PART ONE

CHUCK DIXON — WRITER
TOM LYLE — PENCILLER
ANDY MUSHYNSKY — INKER
ADRIENNE ROY — COLORIST
TODD KLEIN — LETTERER
KELLEY PUCKETT — ASST. ED.
DENNY O'NEIL — EDITOR
BATMAN CREATED BY BOB KANE

A SERIES OF WAREHOUSE ROBBERIES
OVER THE LAST MONTH BRINGS ROBIN
AND ME TO THE WATERMARK DISTRICT
ALONG GOTHAM HARBOR.

INFORMANTS AND
POLICE REPORTS POINT
TO JUNKIES.

BUT THIS GANG IS
STRICTLY PRO.



BATMAN 467. Late August, 1991. Published monthly by DC Comics Inc., 1325 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10019. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to BATMAN, DC Comics Subscriptions, P.O. Box 0528, Baldwin, NY 11510. Annual subscription rate \$12.00. Canadian subscribers must add \$8.00 for postage and GST. GST # is R125921072. All other foreign countries must add \$12.00 for postage. U.S. funds only. Copyright © 1991 DC Comics Inc. All Rights Reserved. The stories, characters and incidents mentioned in this magazine are entirely fictional. All characters featured in this issue and distinctive likenesses thereof are trademarks of DC Comics Inc. Advertising Representative: Print Advertising Representatives, 355 Lexington Avenue, New York, NY 10017 (212) 949-6850. Printed in U.S.A.

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HOW DO YOU WANT TO TAKE THEM?

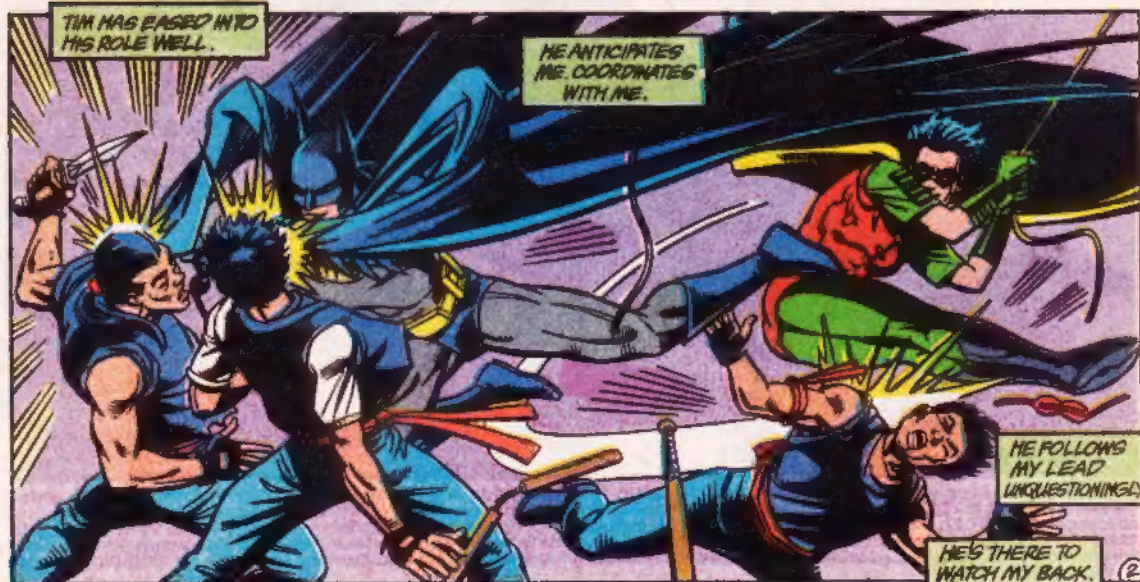
BY SURPRISE.

I THOUGHT YOU'D SAY THAT.

NO GUNS. THAT'S GOOD.

EVERY NIGHT IN THE CITY ADDS TO TIM'S EXPERIENCE.

BUT HE'S NOT READY TO FACE DOWN HORDS OF GUNMEN.

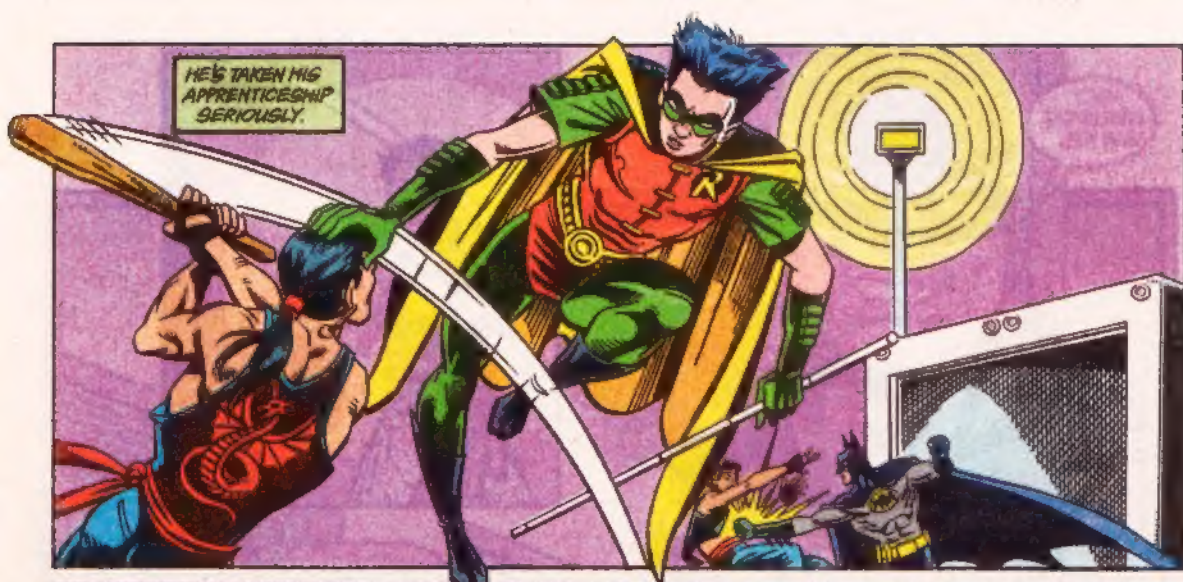


TIM HAS EASED INTO HIS ROLE WELL.

HE ANTICIPATES ME. COORDINATES WITH ME.

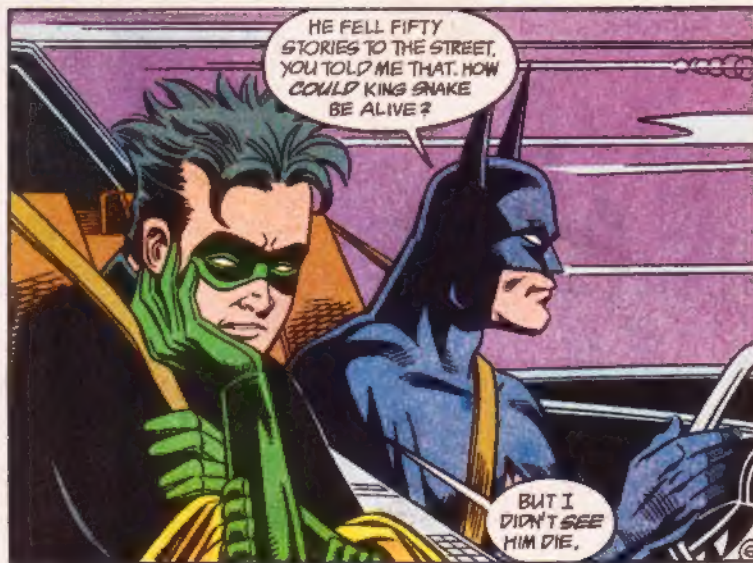
HE FOLLOWS MY LEAD UNQUESTIONINGLY.

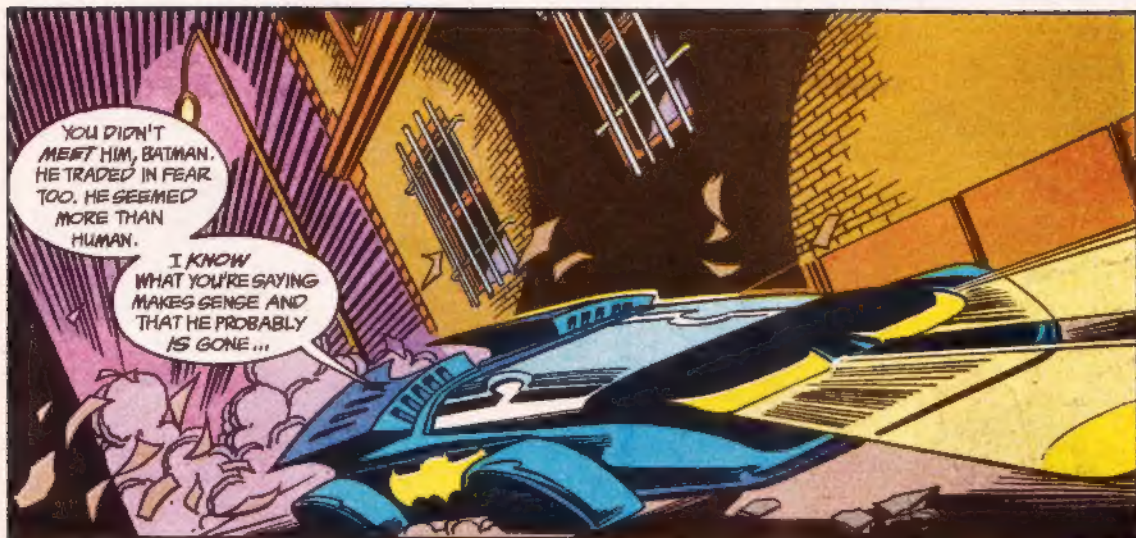
HE'S THERE TO WATCH MY BACK.

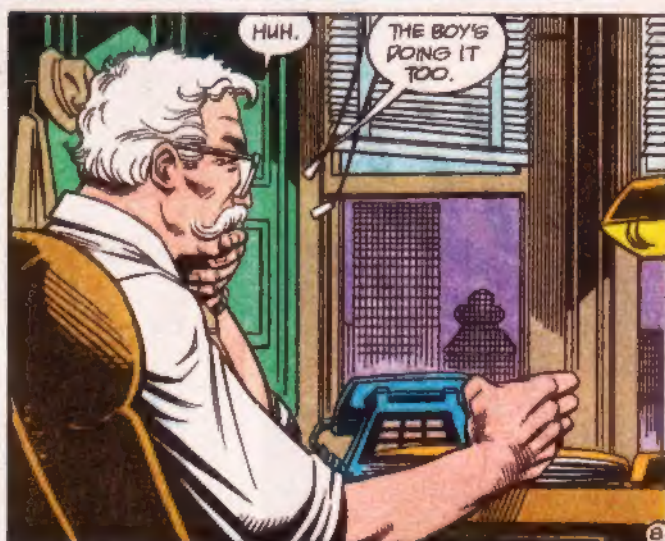
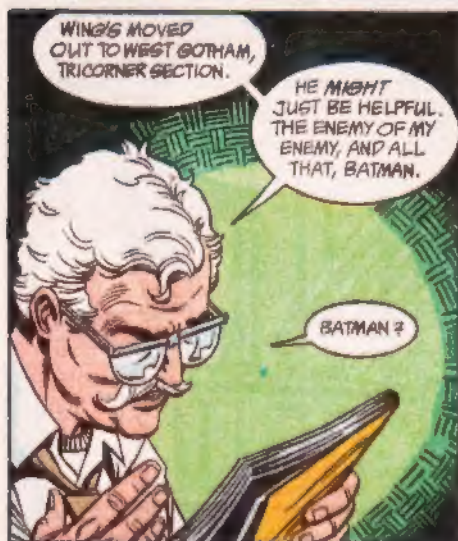
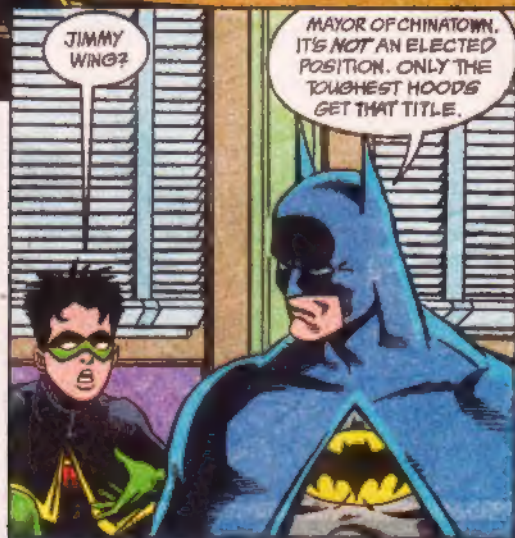
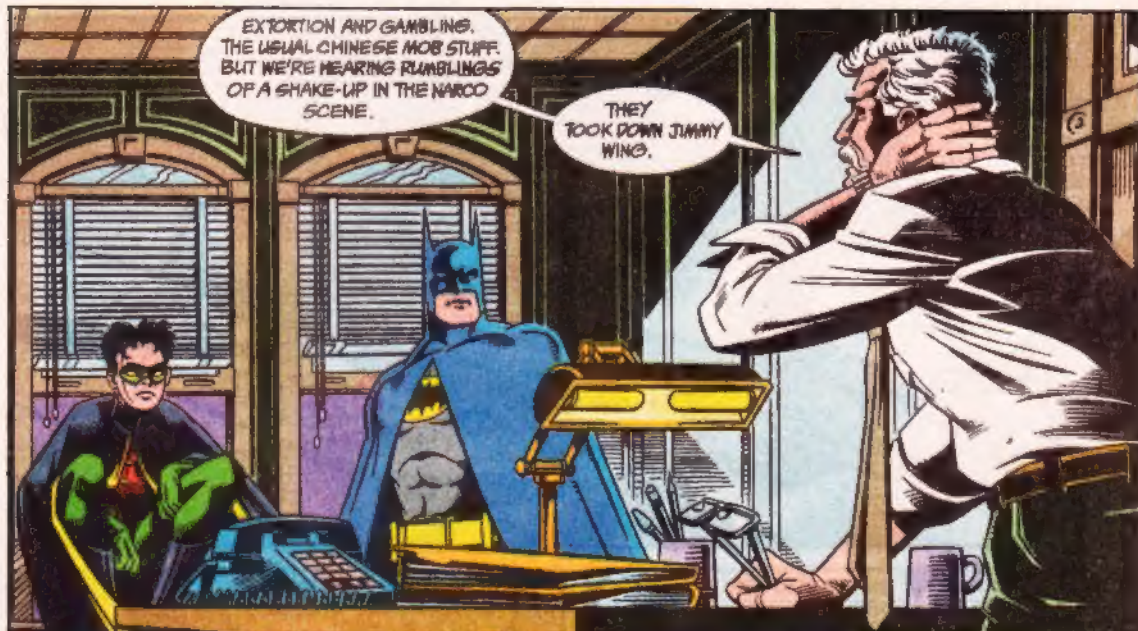


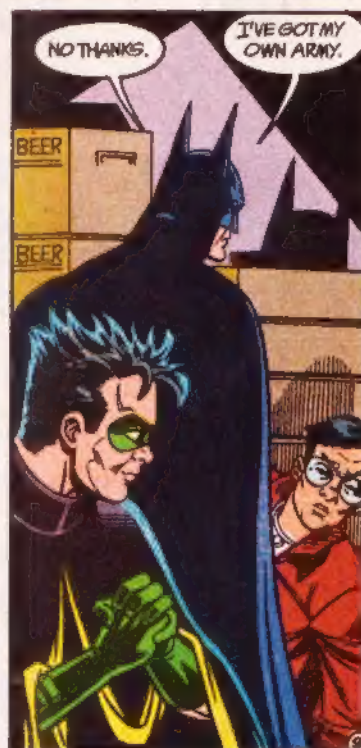
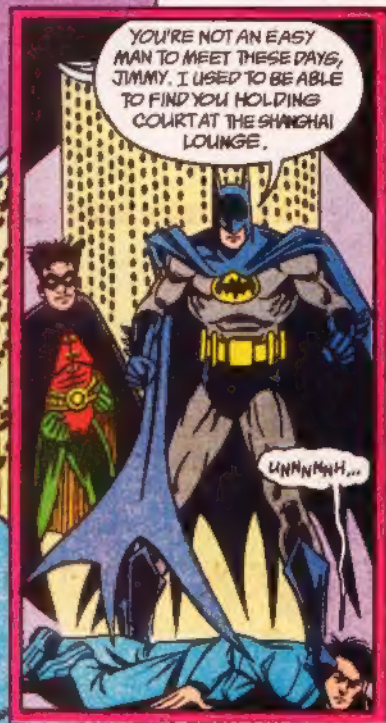


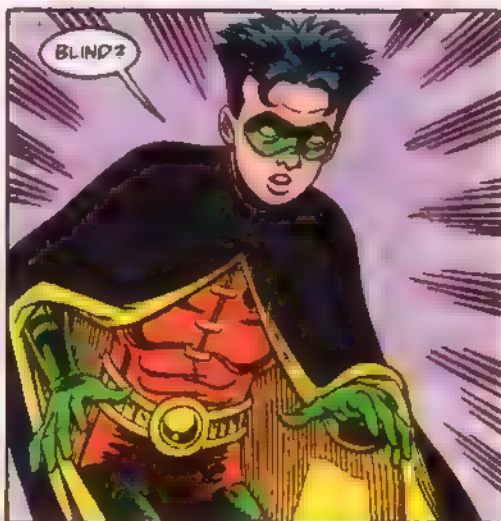
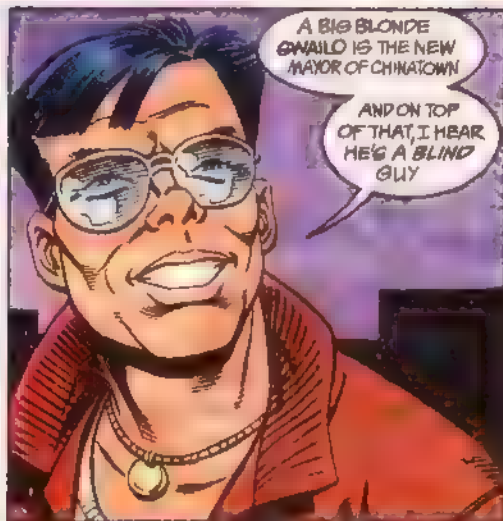
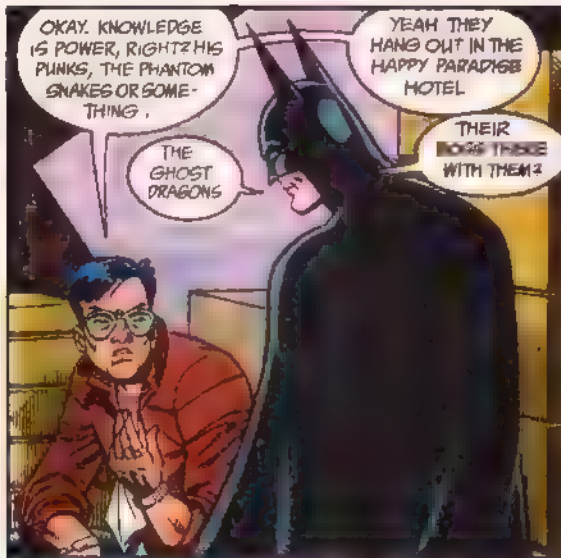


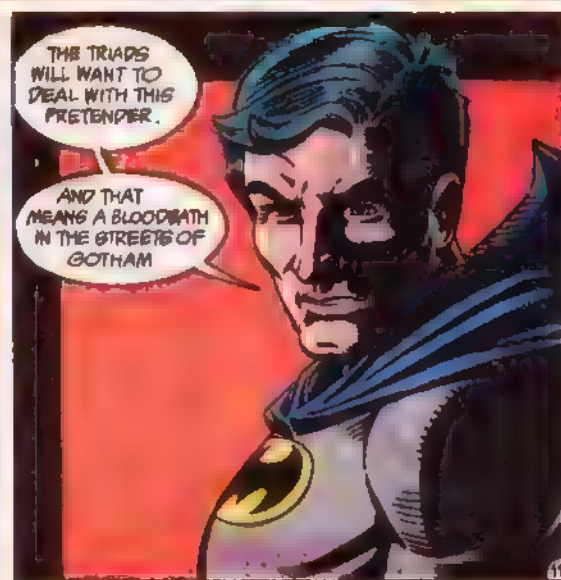
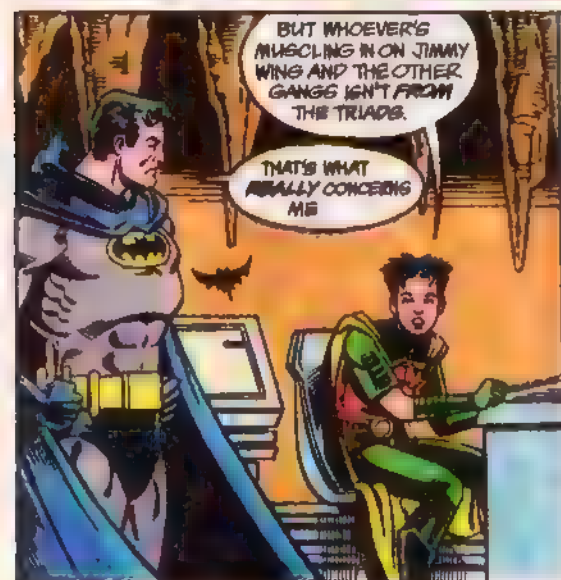
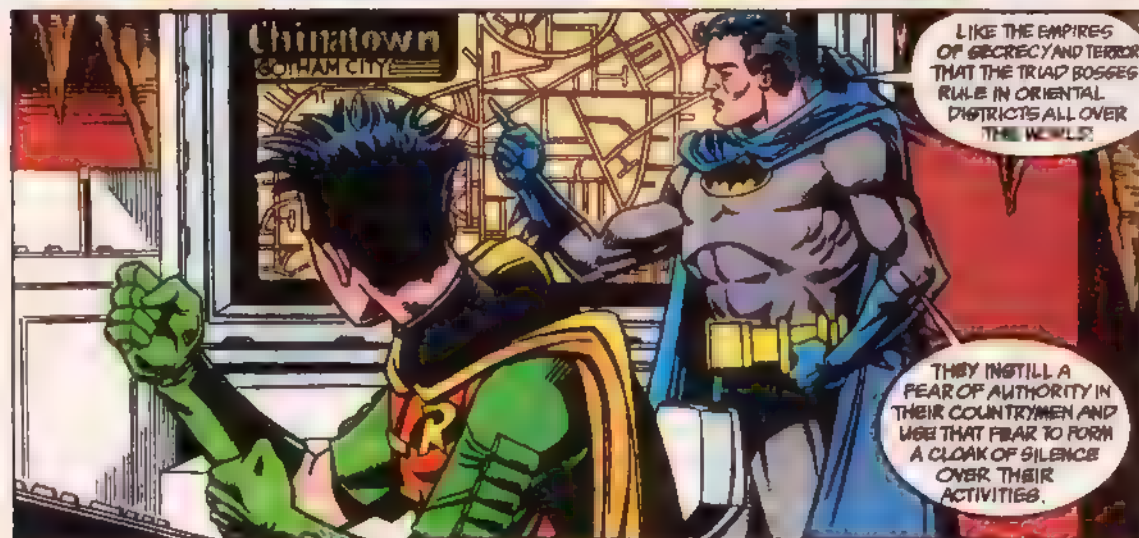
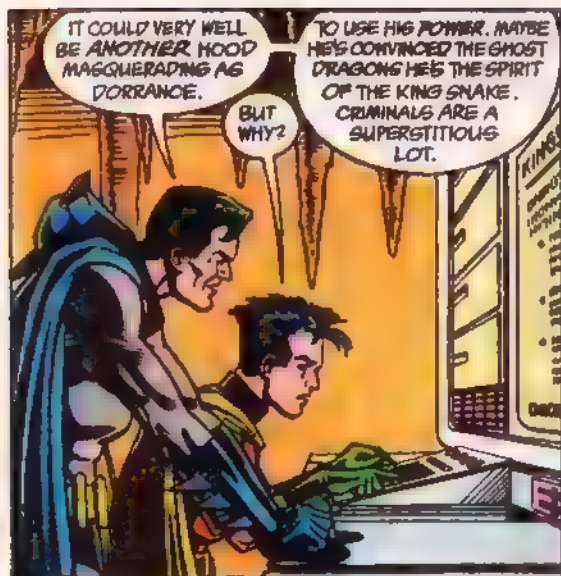


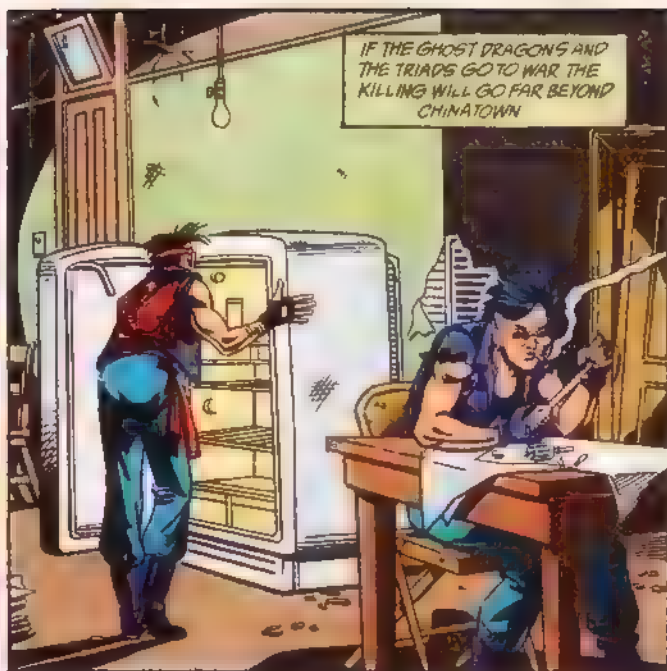


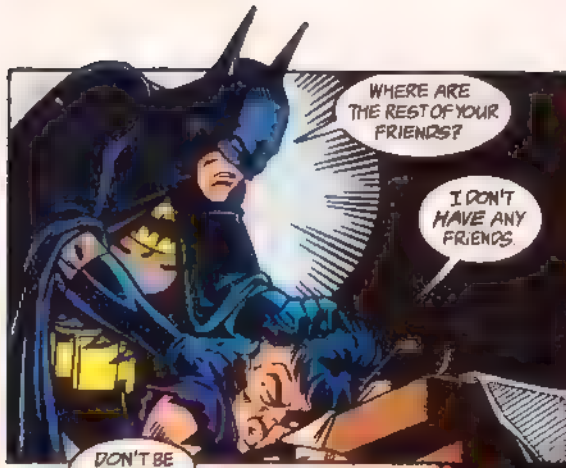












WHERE ARE
THE REST OF YOUR
FRIENDS?

I DON'T
HAVE ANY
FRIENDS.

DON'T BE
STUPID



YOU KNOW
WHO I AM.
THIS IS MY
CITY

I'M NOT GOING
TO LET YOU AND
FILTH LIKE YOU USE
MY CITY AS A
BATTLEGROUND

I'M GOING
TO SWEEP THE
GHOST DRAGONS
BACK INTO THE
SEWERS WHERE
THEY BELONG



I CAN
START WITH
YOU OR I
CAN LET YOU
WALK



OKAYOKAY!
THE FEDS ARE
MOVING OUR GUNS
TONIGHT

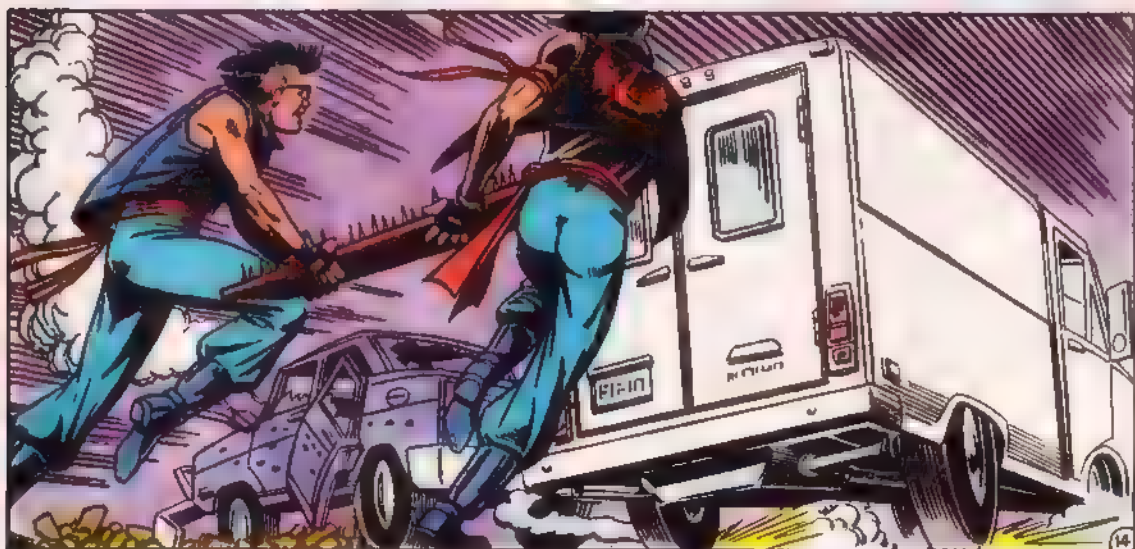
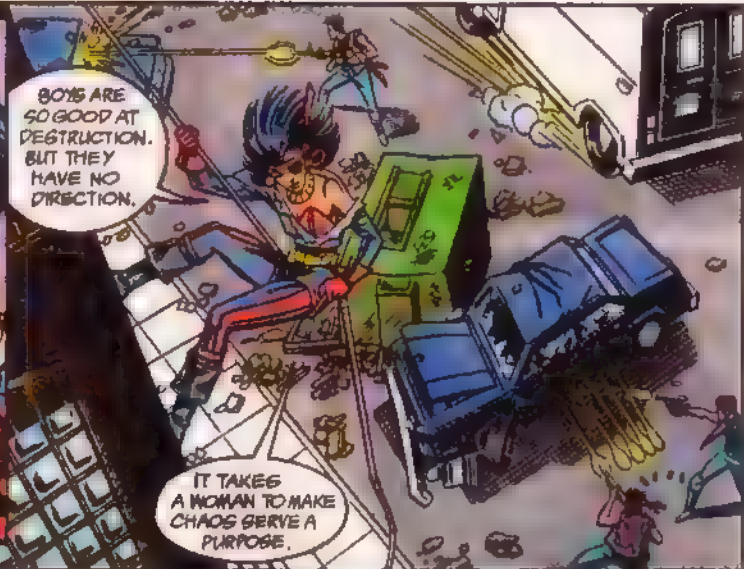
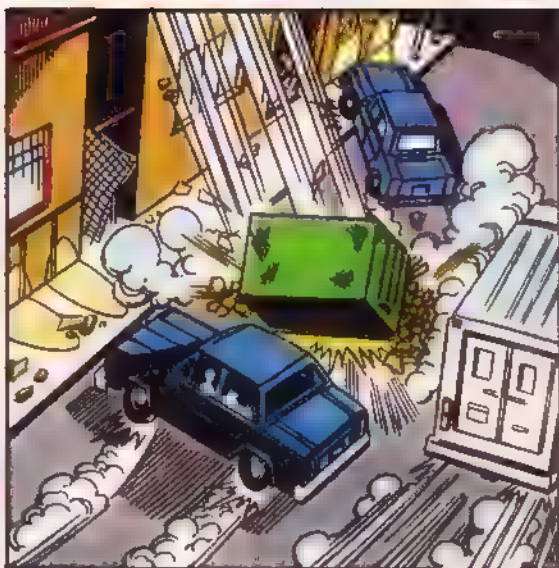
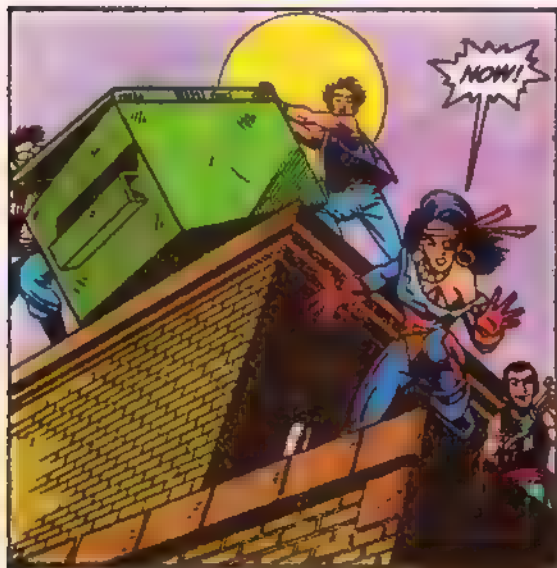
THEY WENT
TO GET THEM.
THE ONES YOU
STOPPED OUR HOMIES
FROM TAKING THE
OTHER NIGHT

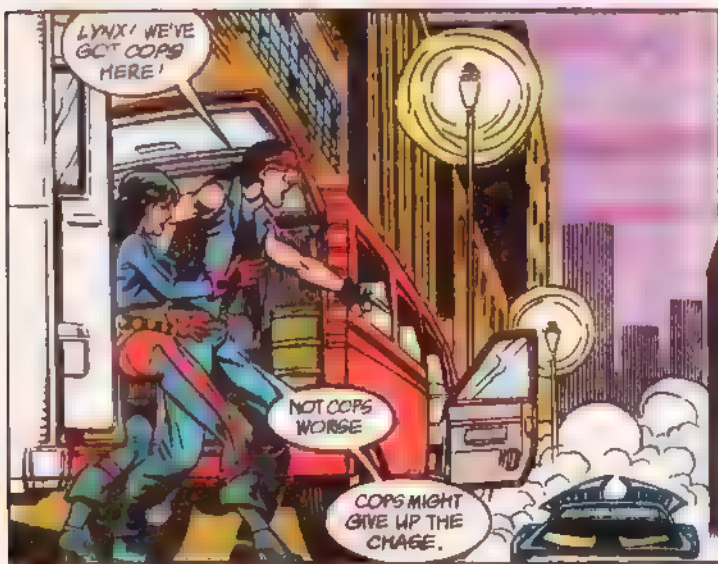
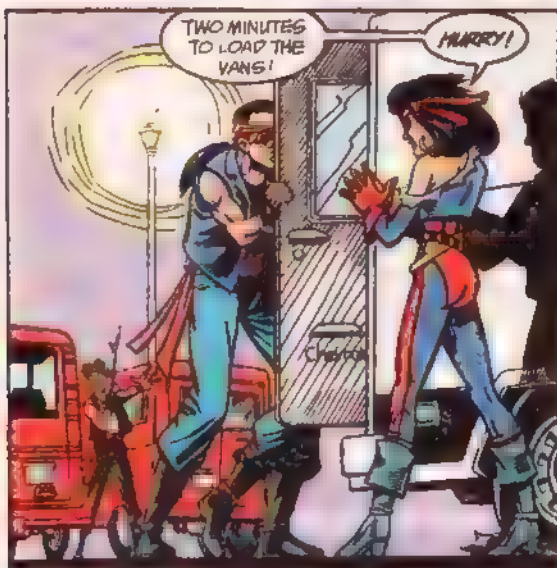
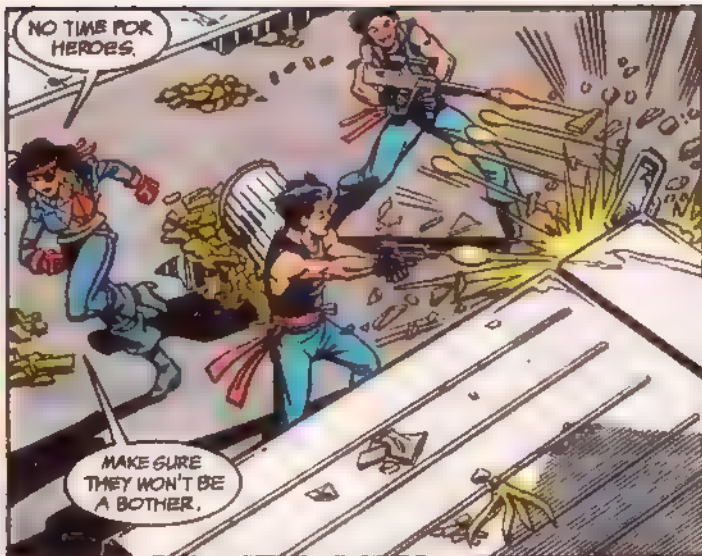
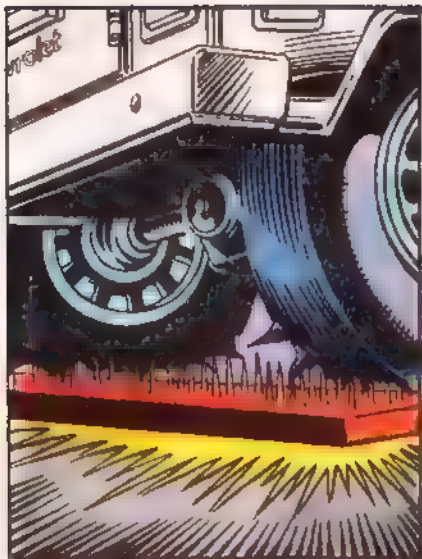
BUT YOU'RE
WAY TOO LATE.
THEY LEFT AN
HOUR AGO.

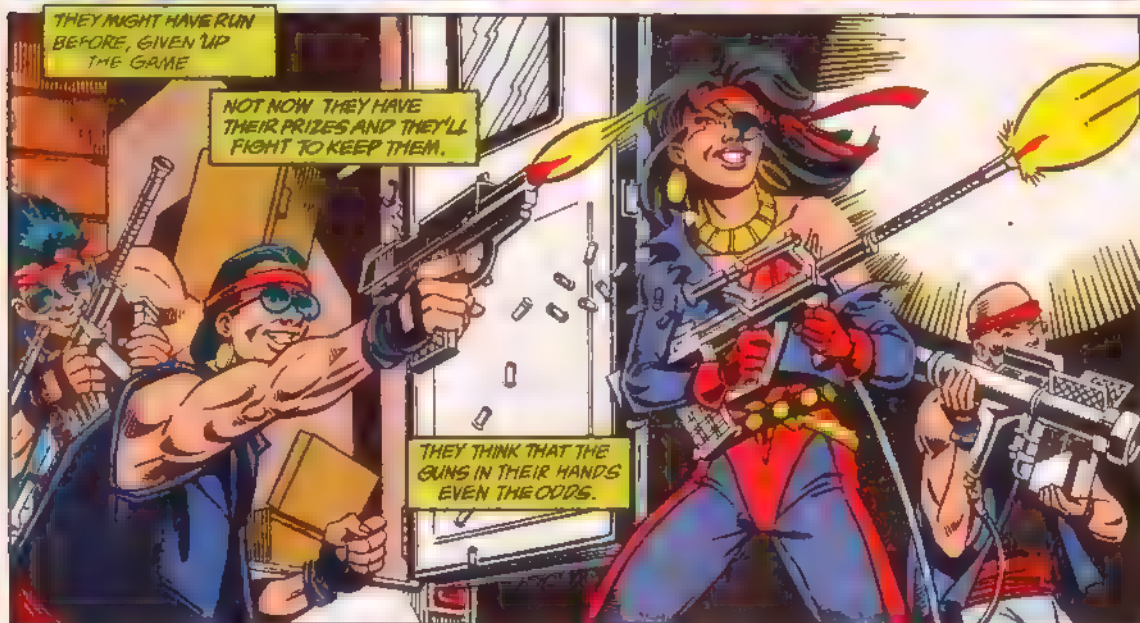
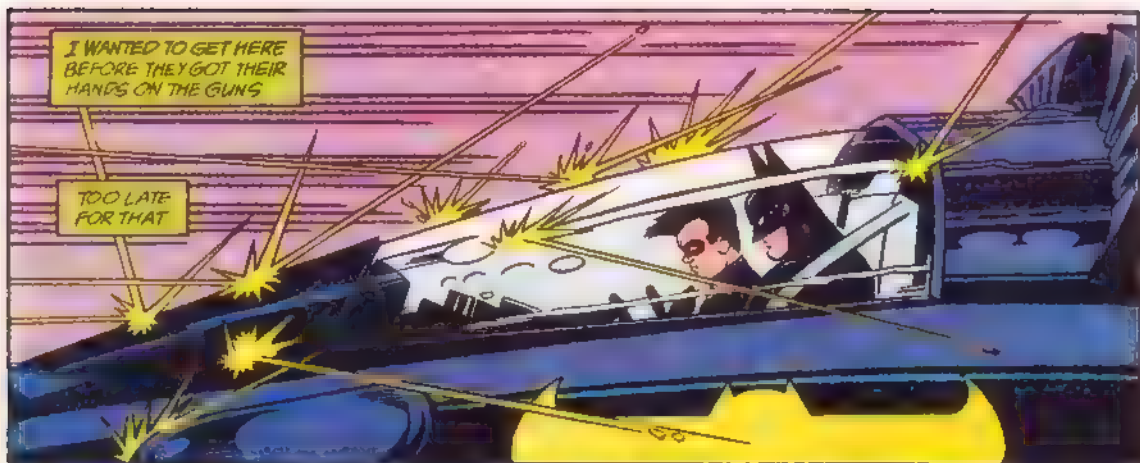


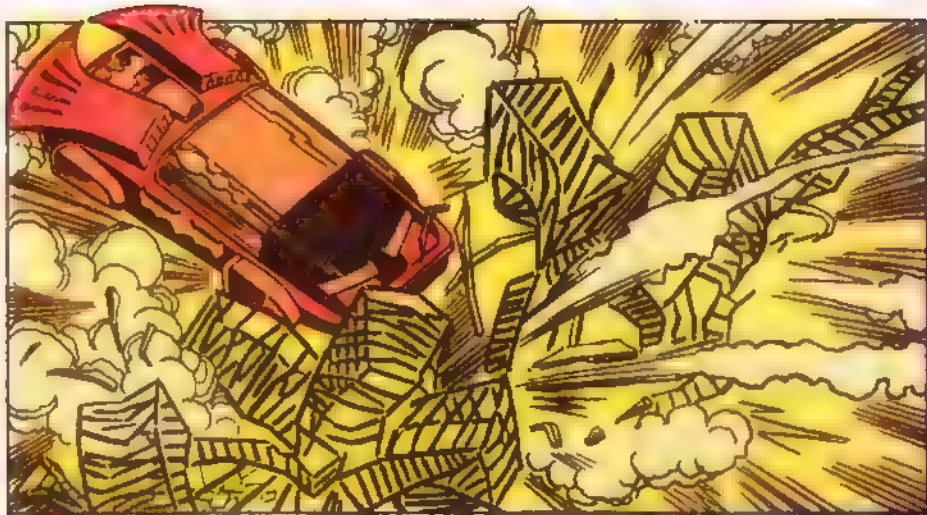
"IT'LL ALL BE OVER
BY THE TIME YOU GET
THERE."

HOLD ON.
STEADY...



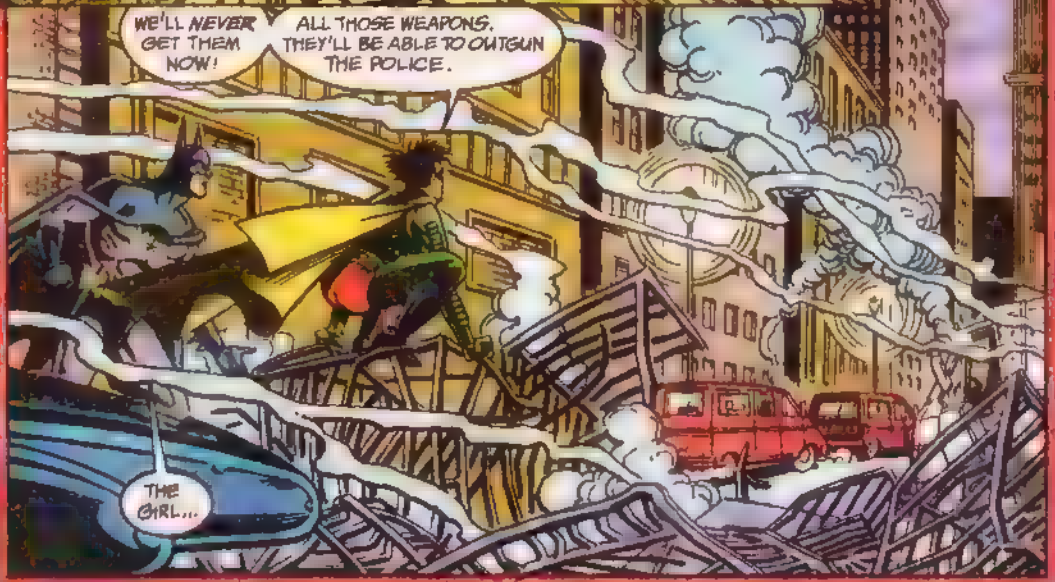






WE'LL NEVER
GET THEM
NOW!

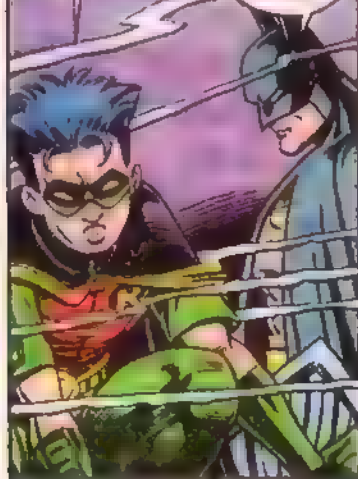
ALL THOSE WEAPONS.
THEY'LL BE ABLE TO OUTGUN
THE POLICE.



THE
GIRL...

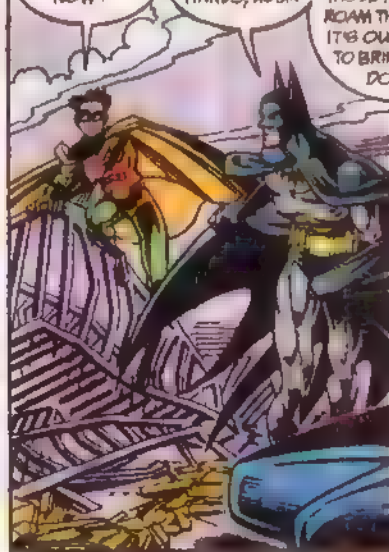
LYNX SHE WAS
DORRANCE'S LEUTENANT.
THE LEADER OF THE
GHOST DRAGONS

WE HAVE
TO ALERT
GORDON.
HE HAS TO
KNOW WHAT
HE'S UP
AGAINST



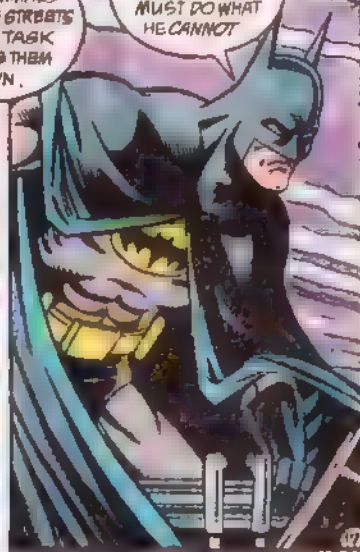
IT'S OUT
OF OUR HANDS
NOW?

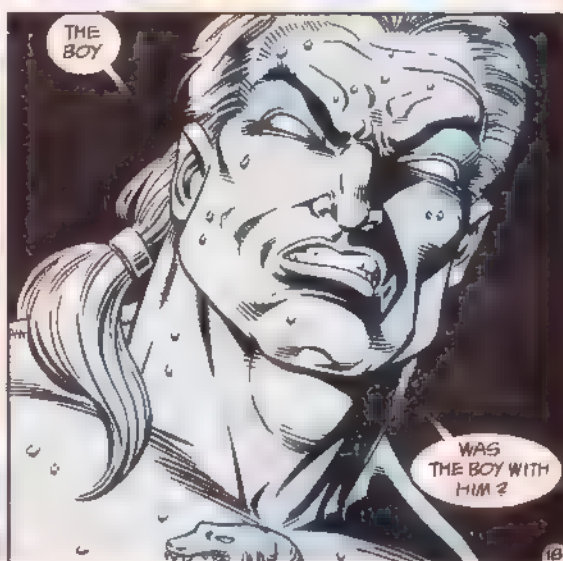
IT'S NEVER
OUT OF OUR
HANDS, ROBIN

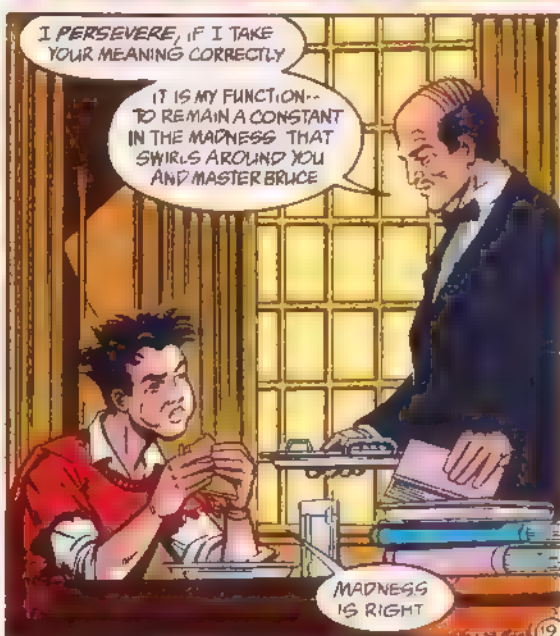
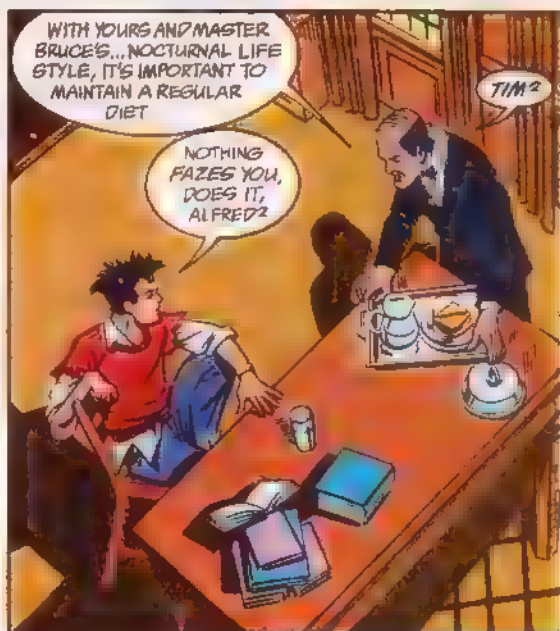
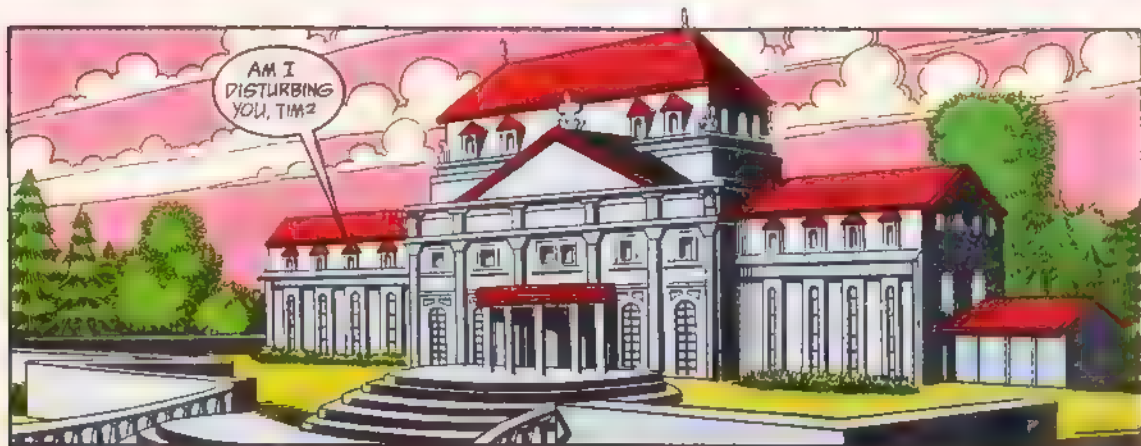


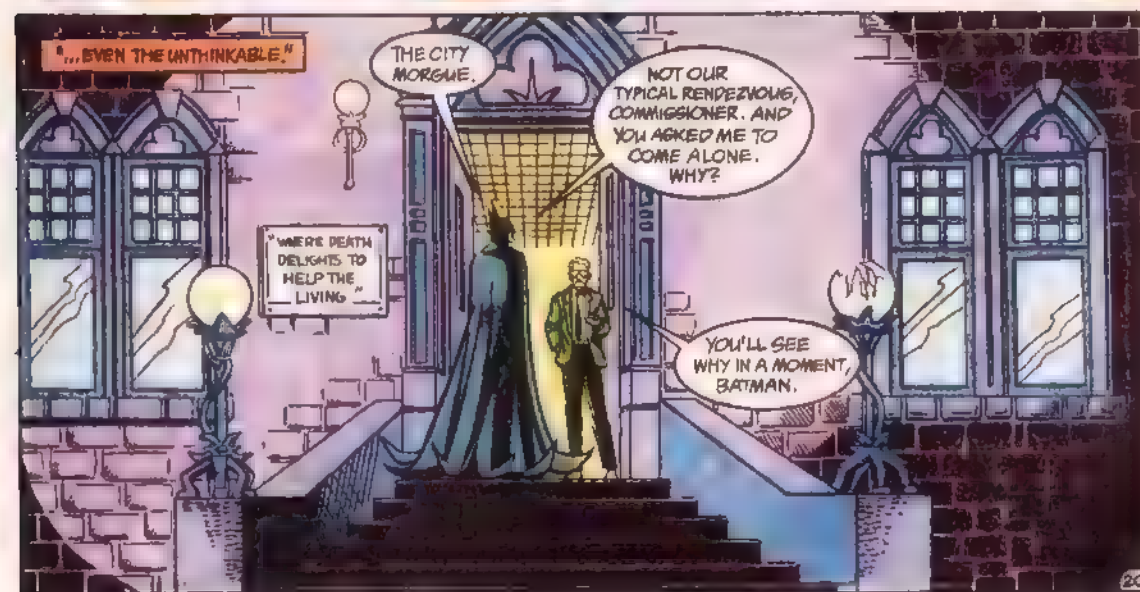
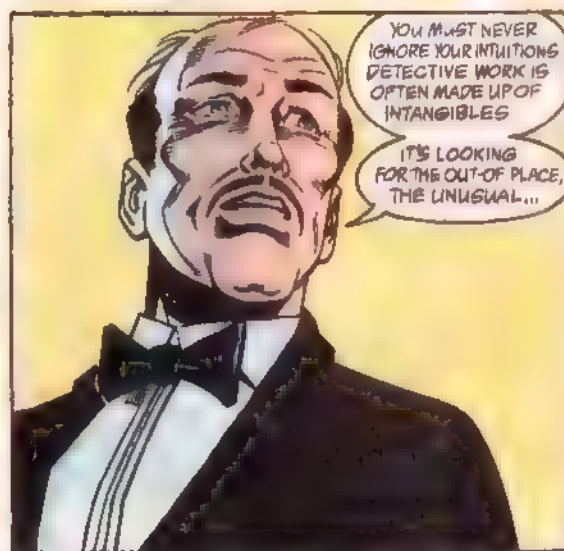
AS LONG AS
THOSE ANIMALS
ROAM THE STREETS
IT'S OUR TASK
TO BRING THEM
DOWN.

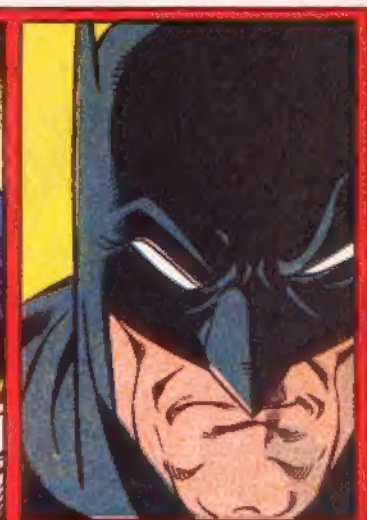
GORDON
MUST DO WHAT
HE CAN. WE
MUST DO WHAT
HE CANNOT













TO BE CONTINUED...



BAT-SIGNALS

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As many of you have no doubt noticed, the letter columns I'm involved in (BATMAN, DETECTIVE, and CAPTAIN ATOM) have been a little scarce of late. All I can say is...it won't happen again.

We've got some catching up to do, so let's look at the letters for #458 and #459.

Dear Denny:

The nobility associated with knight-hood was wonderfully apparent in BATMAN #458.

Batman—whom James Gordon described as "The Night Monster" whose motives leave "no room for choices"—made a humane and noble choice indeed. He rescued Harold from not just a mob but from a life of pain and abuse. He gave him a home and a channel for Harold's immense talents.

The Dark Knight is a knight in the best sense of the term.

Thanks for a heartwarming tale to start this year.

Warmest regards,
 Jan C. Childress
 82 Pierrepont St.
 Brooklyn, NY 11201

You know, sometimes you get the feeling that you're really reaching people out there...

Batman Crew,

Why would Batman take in a freak like Harold?

Wondering,
 Joe Zigmund, Jr.
 338 S. Lehigh Ave.
 Frackville, PA 17931

Then there are the other times...

Dear Denny,

One of the things that sets Batman apart is the depth of his supporting cast. The longevity of the title plays a part in that, as you can make the same comment about Superman, but nowadays, the attitudes of the writers are all-important. You could write good comics about Alfred, Vicki Vale, and, as proved here, Gordon, fully deserving his all too infrequent turn in the spotlight. The return of Sarah Essen is a delightful twist, and it's about time a twist in this book was a happy one. Don't ruin this with an excuse to drop Essen from the cast (like death in the line of duty) in a couple of months.

You know what else was delightful? The return of Harold, and his role away from pawn of evil and as mender of toys. Seeing him being driven away in the Batmobile—there's another delightful twist. It must be Christmas!

Take care,
 Malcolm Bourne
 2 & 4 Bye Rd.
 Shuttleworth, Ramsbottom
 Bury, Lancashire BL0 0HH
 ENGLAND

Dear Bat-People,

I just wanted to commend you on BATMAN issue #458. I have to say that your choice of Harold to be the new Robin is a good one, and I'm looking forward to seeing him in that new costume.

Sincerely,
 Jeremy Young
 4120 Burge
 Iowa City, IA 52242

Uhhhhh...right.

Mr. O'Neil,

BATMAN #458 really shook me up. I still don't know why, but the story really hit me this time. Maybe it was because that in all this darkness that is Gotham there is some light for the good guys. Maybe it was because for once there were no villains. But most likely it was because everyone should have a home and someone to go home to.

Thank you for a wonderful story.
 Todd D. Atteberry
 1450 N. First St. #37
 Salinas, CA 93906

Dear DC dudes,

Children are the least corrupted in our society. They have been given the gift of innocence. What adults see as ugly they see as beautiful in its own way. BATMAN #458 points that out.

All my life I've been taught that all creatures on this planet, including humans, are innately good. The prejudices that strain this society are learned. Harold is a victim of this society of "beautiful people." He is, of course, hated and despised. Why? He looks. To tell you the truth, he makes the Elephant Man look like Tom Selleck. If he were one of the "yuppie scum" beauties, he would be working for NASA. This man is not crazy. Far from it. As far as I know, he's one of the sanest men I've seen. So why did Bats even think of an institution?

You know, Bats is making the best choice in recruiting Harold. He has a lot to offer to Gotham City. He may not be able to compete with Mel Gibson for "Sexiest Man of the Year," but Gibson can't fix computers like typing his shoes. That is why the Supreme Spirit you earthian people call God gives its best gifts to those least likely to abuse. One of your holy books reads "Blessed are the lowly, for they shall inherit the Earth," or something like that. Harold makes me smile. I hope to see more of him soon.

As for Commissioner Gordon, will we be seeing the last of him? He is, of course, getting old. And he's not in the best of health either physically or mentally. That cough's getting bad. Retirement somewhere in the future?

Thanks for the good work. Until next time, there is cool comfort in the darkness when the blinding light scorches your eyes.

Peace.

Sincerely,
 THE DARK SIDE OF THE MOON
 14422 Spotswood Furnace Rd.
 Fredericksburg, VA 22401

"the Supreme Spirit you earthian people call God"?!!?

Dear Editor,

The other day I was perusing the new arrivals at my local comics shop and decided to pick up BATMAN #459. I had picked up two copies of #457 because I know how big new Robin stories are, but I got #459 simply to read and #458 to fill in any gaps.

I loved these two issues. The return of Sarah Essen, Gordon taking her to the movies, and the parallelism between the Waynes and the family in the theater were wonderful. Batman's reaction to the marquee was also enjoyable. I also liked the art. Norm Breyfogle's angular approach to drawing Batman is good. Unfortunately, the colors seemed a bit dull. I never really got the impression that it was dark outside the theater. I realize that this is the fault of the paper and printing, but I really do like Batman stories that look dark. This is a minor complaint, however. I liked these two issues enough that I decided to start getting the book every month, and I've started buying TEC as well. I really enjoy reading BATMAN, and this is about the highest praise I can give you.

Jeff Doar
 (address withheld by request)

Dear Mr. O'Neil,

I really enjoyed BATMAN #459. But pleaseeaaase don't kill Commissioner Gordon. I think he's a good character. I hope you're not going to have a 900 number again.

Russell Jacobs
(address withheld by request)

As you know by now, Russell, Commissioner Gordon has recovered and is doing very well. We're not completely heartless, you know.

Dear Signalers,

I picked up issue #459 and as I read it I thought that it was a nice little fill-in break between major stories. It had the Zorro, family death angle, some thugs, and even advanced the Harold plot. Nothing spectacular, but OK. That was until the last three pages—as powerful as any I've ever seen. I had heard about this, but I had forgotten; either way it was strong. I have never seen such glee and optimism in such a sincere and non-sweet form as on page 20. Then it cut out from under you on the next page. The last page could be a poster. Dark and foreboding. Another victim of Gotham City. Another victim of the Bat...

Chris Connelly
7008 Appoline
Dearborn, MI 48126

Dear Denny,

I can't tell you how pleased I am that Commissioner Gordon had a heart attack. Now, it's nothing personal, he's a great character. In fact, that only makes it better that he's suffering the effects of smoking. I just spent a month working in the coronary intensive care unit and I can tell you that tobacco, like drugs, makes no distinction between 'good' and 'bad' people when it kills. It doesn't even care about age. I cared simultaneously for 75-year-old to 35-year-old men, all of whom had had massive heart attacks. It was sad to see the previously healthy, athletic young men lying in the intensive care unit side by side with the older men, all equally crippled for life. What had happened to the young men? They weren't overweight, they ate right and exercised. The only thing they did wrong was to smoke. Not a lot—a half a pack to a pack a day, ever since they were teenagers, "grown up" enough to start destroying themselves, believing in their own immortality. Sorry, guys, but you don't have to be old and fat like Commissioner Gordon to die. You only have to smoke.

Sincerely,
Janine Coles
(address withheld by request)

Dearest Bat-Team:

You had to do it, didn't you?

After giving us the wonderful message in issue #458, in which Jim Gordon discovers for the rest of us that it is never too late to "feel like a kid again," you now give him a heart attack! All those hopes you raised in

issue #458 are now dashed, maybe never to rise again, with that gut-wrenching scene on page 21.

Of course, the Commissioner had it coming. Putting everything off 'til "Monday" did him in. You can procrastinate all you want, but you won't be a kid (however much you may feel like one) forever. Sad but true. Still, did you have to make him look so overweight before the heart attack came?

Well, now I eagerly anticipate the next issue, which looks to be one long hospital bed story.

See you in 28,
Peter T. Chettaway
6666 Arlington St.
Vancouver, B.C. V5S 3N9

Dear Denny,

Re: BATMAN #459

In the hands of a lesser writer, the integration of "The Mark of Zorro" into a modern Batman yarn could have been just another excuse to add to the already burgeoning collection of Bat-origin rehashings, but the talented Mr. Grant instead uses the opportunity to explore the troubling issue of excessive violence in the media ("Where Stalks the Skeletoid"), the changing face of matinee (and maybe comic book?) heroes through the decades, and the budding romance between Jim Gordon and Sarah Essen. Of course, the parallels between the Waynes and little Peter's family are obvious, as is the Joe Chill/Danny Ressler similarity. But that's just a set-up for the big one-two at the story's conclusion, anyway. If the goal here was to graphically illustrate the evils of smoking, then you've succeeded admirably. My heart goes out to Gordon; if any character deserves a "happy ending," he does. I hope the powers that be at DC will let this heart attack serve as a powerful warning instead of a fatal lesson. Batman without Gordon is like, well, Batman without Robin (Hmmm, on second thought...)

On the artistic side of things, Breyfogle and Mitchell are continuing a winning streak in their illustrations for this book. Norm has a knack for giving even the most minor characters well-wrought facial expressions, from the terror-stricken F. Joseph Leonard to the petulant, whining, Peter Whoaits. And his Batman is, of course, the best drawn in comics today. Just check out that look of rage on page 8; here is a Darknight Detective who would scare this reader in a dark alley!

On the whole, another fine issue from comicdom's Bat-team supreme. Keep up the great work, one and all!

Chris Schillig
816 St. Mary's Apt. F
Sidney, OH 45365

If you like Norm's work in BATMAN (and a whole lot of you obviously do), you're going to go insane over HOLY TERROR, an upcoming Batman project written by Alan Brennert with full art by el Señor Breyfogle himself. It's going to be one of the biggest hits of the year. Watch for it.

NEXT ISSUE: Batman's trying to keep Robin out of trouble. King Snake's trying to get Robin into trouble. And Lynx is having a gay old time trashing Gotham City. What does the Boy Wonder have to say about all this? Be here for part two of "Shadow Box" by the team that brought you ROBIN—Chuck Dixon and Tom Lyle, joined by ace inker Andy Mushynsky.

—Kelley Puckett
with names like these,
it's just got to be good

From the Den



We've moved again.

This is the fifth address DC Comics has had since I first wandered into Dick Giordano's office twenty-something years ago, and the nicest. We have two—count 'em, two—floors in a new building with more offices than I can count. The ventilation is good, the corridors wide, and I have a window. In the old place, every work day as I got off the elevator, I could feel my nervous system collapsing like a row of dominoes because I knew I was voluntarily entering a space where, even on the brightest summer afternoons, I would see no sun.

Outside the window, across Fifty-Third Street, workmen are completing a renovation of a major hotel. Someday, I might look over there and glimpse something that will change my life.

Meanwhile, we don't have much adjusting to do. We're only two blocks from where we used to be, so we know where the restaurants are, and the delis, and the subway and bus stops. For some of us, getting here is a trifle easier; for some, harder. But no one is complaining.

Our new location has one possible tiny (microscopic? Infinitesimal?) advantage over the old: It's away from fancy Fifth Avenue where, as regular readers know, I don't feel we ever belonged, and close to the section of Seventh that is virtually indistinguishable from Broadway. That means we're a block from the theater district. Now, I still say that a comic book company should be located somewhere neat—a houseboat anchored off Sausalito, maybe, or in a Fuller-dome halfway up Mount Hood—but if we have to be in Manhattan (and a whole phalanx of guys in suits assures me that we do) it's better to be near theaters than stores whose security men won't let you windowshop without a platinum credit card. This is more our natural habitat. As someone once said, comics are frozen show biz.

In a weeks or two, we'll be fully settled in. The remaining cardboard boxes will be gone, we'll have mastered a phone system that at the moment daunts many of us, we'll be able to distinguish the decaf from the regular coffee pot and maybe, in idle moments, we'll be hoping to stay here for a while.

Denny